Washington, DC – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-2) announced today that the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Services, Crop Genetics and Breeding Research Unit in Tifton, Georgia, in collaboration with the University of Georgia researchers at the National Environmentally Sound Production Agriculture Laboratory and the Center for Applied Genetic Technologies, has received a $1 million Federal grant for Peanut Genome Mapping and Marker Development.

The Federal funds will be used to sequence and map the peanut genome and develop molecular markers that can be used in marker assisted breeding. The project aims to provide U.S. consumers with a higher quality and safer product while using fewer pesticides and less water.

“This funding is great news for Georgia – for our dedicated peanut farmers, our state economy, and industry to have the best peanut products available” said Congressman Bishop. “I am pleased that the peanut genome will be studied, helping our farmers to increase productivity, develop a safer product, and reduce dependence on pesticides.”

A roadmap for peanut gene organization will bring opportunities to help solve problems such as peanut allergies and to deliver new highly productive, high-quality disease-resistant varieties that can ensure sustainability of U.S. food production.

“Recently, peanut allergies have been an increasing concern, factoring into the Department of Transportation’s proposed ban of peanuts on airplanes, said Congressman Bishop. “I have heard the concerns of those people with peanut allergies, and parents of children with peanut allergies, and I am confident that this research project will yield fruitful results towards helping those with this allergy.”

“I have great confidence in our peanut farmers, the Crop Genetics and Breeding Research Unit in Tifton, and the University of Georgia. I have worked hard to ensure this project receives funding, and I am very proud to live up to my nickname, “the Peanut Congressman.”

Georgia produces over 50% of US peanuts, $582 million per year. If aflatoxin contamination

can be reduced, and disease resistance increased, peanuts will become a staple in the world food supply. The relevant genes must be identified to accomplish this quickly. Plant genetics and breeding enables Georgia farmers to grow higher quality crops such as peanuts with fewer inputs making U.S. agriculture more competitive.

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